

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 01881 050707Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----118657 061054Z /11

R 050600Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7447
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T BEIRUT 1881

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: LE, SY, MOPS, PINS, PEPR
SUBJ: REMARKS OF ASIM QANSUH

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. ACCORDING TO LOCAL BA'ATH PARTY LEADER ASIM QANSUH, SYRIA WANTS TO GET ITS SOLDIERS OUT OF LEBANON. THE SYRIAN ARMY WOULD NOT CONSIDER ADVANCING TO THE LITANI AS LONG AS THE ISRAELIS REMAINED IN LEBANON. SYRIA WOULD NOT ALLOW ANY MORE IRAQI VOLUNTEERS OR HEAVY WEAPONS TO ENTER LEBANON THROUGH SYRIAN CONTROLLED TERRITORY. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBOFF CALLED ON ASIM QANSUH, HEAD OF PRO-SYRIAN BA'ATH PARTY IN LEBANON, ON APRIL 4. QANSUH, WHO SEEMED QUITE DEPRESSED, HAD RECENTLY RETURNED FROM THREE DAYS IN DAMASCUS WHERE HE HAD MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM AND OTHER OFFICIALS. QANSUH OFFERED FOLLOWING
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 01881 050707Z

REMARKS.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM HAD SAID THAT SYRIA HAD TO FIND SOME WAY TO WITHDRAW ITS ARMY FROM LEBANON HONORABLY. ARMY'S PRESENCE RISKED CONFLICT WITH PALESTINIANS AND CHRISTIANS, NOT TO MENTION ISRAELIS. PRESIDENT SARKIS WAS HOPELESSLY INDECISIVE. THUS SYRIANS HAD TO GET OUT.

WHEN ASKED WHEN, HOWEVER, KHADDAM HAD REPLIED ONLY
"SOONER OR LATER."

4. KHADDAM HAD ALSO STRESSED THAT SYRIA AT THIS MOMENT
WISHED TO AVOID WAR WITH ISRAEL. SYRIA WAS GOING TO
FIGHT, KHADDAM HAD SAID, BUT WOULD CHOOSE TIME AND
PLACE.

5 QANSUH CONTINUED THAT SYRIAN ARMY WOULD NOT CONSIDER
ADVANCING TO NORTH BANK OF LITANI AS LONG AS ISRAELIS
WERE IN LEBANON: SYRIA COULD NOT BE IN A POSITION OF
SEEMING TO DO ISRAEL'S POLICE WORK. SYRIAN ARMY WOULD
BE WILLING TO ADVANCE SOUTH, HOWEVER, IF UNITED NATIONS
TROOPS WERE IN PLACE ALONG LITANI AND ISRAELIS HAD WITH-
DRAWN.

6. THERE WOULD BE NO STABILITY IN LEBANON UNTIL ALL
MILITIA WERE DISARMED. BOTH KHADDAM AND PRESIDENT ASSAD
HAD AFFIRMED THAT SARG WAS PREPARED TO ORDER ITS ARMY
IN LEBANON TO DISARM BOTH PALESTINIAN AND CHRISTIAN
MILITIA IF: (A) BOTH U.S.A. AND USSR APPROVED; AND
(B) ISRAELIS PROMISED THAT THEY WOULD NOT TAKE
ADVANTAGE OF SITUATION TO ATTACK EITHER SYRIA OR
LEBANON.

7. QANSUH SAID THAT SYRIA WOULD DEFINITELY NOT ALLOW
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 01881 050707Z

ANY MORE IRAQI VOLUNTEERS TO ENTER LEBANON, AS DAMASCUS
DID NOT WANT TO PERMIT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SIGNIFICANT
ANTI-SYRIAY FORCE HERE. QANSUH ACCEPTED AS ACCURATE
REPORT IN LEFTIST AS SAFIR THAT IRAQI VOLUNTEERS WOULD
LEAVE LEBANON SOON.

8. QANSUH SAID SYRIA WOULD ALSO ALLOW NO MORE HEAVY
MILITARY EQUIPMENT TO ENTER LEBANON THROUGH SYRIAN
CONTROLLED TERRITORY. SYRIA WOULD CONTINUE TO PERMIT
MODEST SHIPMENTS OF SMALL ARMS AMMUNITION TO THE
LEBANESE NATIONAL MOVEMENT, BUT NOT TO PALESTINIANS WHO
HAD ALL THE WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION THEY NEEDED.

9. QANSUH SAID THAT AL-MURABITUN HAD ONLY 400 TO 500
ARMED PEOPLE IN BEIRUT AREA. HE ALSO CLAIMED THAT
THERE WERE ONLY 250 LEBANESE FIGHTERS WITH JOINT FORCES
IN SOUTH LEBANON. MOST OF THE PEOPLE ADVERTISED AS
BEING LEBANESE WERE IN FACT PALESTINIANS, AND AL
MURABITUN WAS NOTHING MORE THAT A FATAH FRONT.

10. NATIONAL MOVEMENT LEADERS HAD BEEN SPREADING THE
STORY IN BEIRUT THAT PRIME MINISTER HOSS HAD TOLD THEM

THAT THE FRENCH WOULD INCREASE THEIR CONTINGENT IN LEBANON TO 8,000 PEOPLE AND TAKE OVER THE TASK OF MAINTAINING SECURITY IN THE BEIRUT AREA FROM THE ADF. (QANSUH REMARKED THAT SYRIA WOULD WELCOME SUCH A FRENCH ROLE. EMBOFF REPLIED THAT THE STORY WAS SIMPLY UNTRUE. END COMMENT.)

11. FINALLY, QANSUH SAID HE HAD RECEIVED NUMEROUS REPORTS THAT "EXTERMIST CHRISTIANS AND ISRAELIS" WERE PLOTTING TO ASSASSINATE PRO-SYRIAN FIGURES IN LEBANON INCLUDING HIMSELF, KAMAL SHATILA AND ZUHAIR MOHSEN. QANSUH SAID HE GREATLY FEARED FOR HIS SAFETY.

12. COMMENT. QANSUH MAY BE EXAGGERATING. NEVERTHELESS, SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 BEIRUT 01881 050707Z

HIS ASSERTION THAT SYRIA'S OVERALL COMMITMENT TO LEBANON IS WEAKENING, AT LEAST IN KHADDAM'S VIEW, AND HIS SOMEWHAT CONFLICTING STATEMENT THAT BOTH ASSAD AND KHADDAM WOULD MOVE TO DISARM MILITIAS SUGGESTS, IF TRUE, SOME FUNDAMENTAL REAPPRAISAL BY SYRIA OF ITS ROLE IN LEBANON. WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY DAMASCUS COMMENTS. PARKER

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PERSONAL OPINION, TROOP DEPLOYMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BEIRUT01881
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780148-0815
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780488/aaaacwko.tel
Line Count: 143
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7ca15cb5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3060428
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: REMARKS OF ASIM QANSUH
TAGS: MOPS, PINS, PEPR, PDEV, LE, SY, (QANSUH, ASIM)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7ca15cb5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014